

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 02838 01 OF 02 211303Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----106357 211308Z /41

O P 211243Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3344
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 02838

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: BRITISH ATTITUDES TO THE SALISBURY
ANNOUNCEMENT

1. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS LISTENING CAREFULLY TO
THE REACTION OF PRESS AND PARLIAMENT BEFORE DECIDING
HOW BEST TO PROCEED IN THE WAKE OF THE SALISBURY
ANNOUNCEMENT. THERE ARE SEVERAL POINTS ABOUT
THESE BRITISH CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WE SHOULD KEEP IN
MIND AS WE SEEK TO DEVELOP OUR OWN POSITION.

/

2. DOMESTIC POLITICS: THIS IS PROBABLY AN ELEC-
TION YEAR IN BRITAIN AND THE RESULT IS EXPECTED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 02838 01 OF 02 211303Z

TO BE CLOSE. THERE ARE NOT MANY VOTES ONE WAY OR
THE OTHER IN THE RHODESIA QUESTION ITSELF, BUT WHEN
ADDED TO EMOTIVE DOMESTIC ISSUES SUCH AS LAW AND
ORDER, RACE RELATIONS, AND IMMIGRATION, RHODESIA
COULD HEIGHTEN THE ACRIMONIOUS ATMOSPHERE OF A
POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. THERE IS WIDE-SPREAD POPULAR
SYMPATHY HERE FOR THE KITH AND KIN OF RHODESIA,

FOR THE ROMANTIC INDIVIDUALISM OF THE FARAWAY PIONEERS, AND FOR THE DEFIANT LEADERSHIP OF IAN SMITH. IF SMITH APPEARS TO HAVE REACHED A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT WITH A CREDIBLE COMBINATION OF NATIONALISTS, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THIS GOVERNMENT TO EXPLAIN WHY THE AGREEMENT SHOULD NOT BE ENDORSED, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE PUBLIC HAS SEEN SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS FRUSTRATED IN THEIR EFFORTS TO MAKE SMITH REACH JUST SUCH AN ACCORD.

3. THE REASONS WHY THE LABOR GOVERNMENT FAILS TO EMBRACE AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND THE REASONS WHY IT MAY CONTINUE TO TALK TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT (FOR WHOM THERE IS LITTLE PUBLIC SYMPATHY HERE) WILL HAVE TO BE STARKLY CLEAR AND DEFENSIBLE. CALLAGHAN AND OWEN DO NOT WANT TO HAND THIS ISSUE TO A CONSERVATIVE PARTY WHICH IS WAITING TO POUNCE. IN THIS POLITICAL YEAR, THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS SENSED THE LIMITS OF THE RHODESIA ISSUE, AND ITS PUBLIC STATEMENTS WILL REFLECT THIS DOMESTIC REALITY.

4. THE LEGAL ANGLE: FOR BRITAIN, RHODESIA IS A LEGAL ANACHRONISM, THE MOST TATTERED REMNANT OF A DISTANT IMPERIAL EPOCH. WHILE THE BRITISH ARE CONCERNED WITH THE POWER POLITICS OF RHODESIA, AND PARTICULARLY WITH HOW THEIR GREATER INTERESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LONDON 02838 01 OF 02 211303Z

MAY EVENTUALLY BE AFFECTED, THE GOVERNMENT HERE IS NEVERTHELESS CONSCIOUS THAT ITS LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY HAS PUT BRITAIN IN A UNIQUE AND UNHAPPY POSITION. THE PROSPECT OF A GRADUALLY INTERNATIONALIZED CIVIL WAR IN RHODESIA OF COURSE DISTURBS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, AS IT DOES THE FRENCH AND GERMAN AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS. BUT THERE IS A REAL SENSITIVITY HERE THAT BRITAIN HAS BEEN SINGLED OUT BY HISTORY AS SOMEHOW MORE RESPONSIBLE, MORE VULNERABLE, AND MORE CULPABLE FOR A SITUATION OVER WHICH IT HAS NEVER HAD MUCH CONTROL.

5.

THE SALISBURY ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE PROSPECT THAT IT MAY LEAD TO AN AGREEMENT THEREFORE GIVES THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCHARGE ITS UNIQUE LEGAL OBLIGATION, TO GET OFF ITS PECULIARLY POINTED HOOK. THE GOVERNMENT HERE LOOKS AT THE ANNOUNCEMENT AS A POSSIBLE WAY OF DIVESTING THIS INHERITED RESPONSIBILITY AND UNWANTED UNIQUENESS, AND RETURNING TO THE MORE APPROPRIATE ROLE OF A CONCERNED EUROPEAN POWER. THERE IS THERE-

FORE A TEMPTATION TO SOLVE THE LEGAL PROBLEM NOW AND

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 02838 02 OF 02 211302Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----106349 211308Z /41

O P 211243Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3345
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 02838

EXDIS

WORRY ABOUT THE POWER POLITICS LATER.

6. THE NEW REALITY: IN THE LONG EFFORT TO ACHIEVE
A SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA, ANY GOVERNMENT HERE WOULD
FIND IT DIFFICULT TO IGNORE THE SALISBURY ANNOUNCEMENT.
AFTER ALL THE WORDS AND ALL THE WHITE PAPERS OF THE
LAST TWELVE YEARS, SOMETHING HAS ACTUALLY BEEN AGREED.
OBSERVERS HERE, LONG EXPERIENCED IN RHODESIA POLITICS,
WOULD SAY THAT AN AGREEMENT WHICH INCLUDED ALL THE
MAJOR FIGURES WAS NEVER VERY LIKELY ANYWAY, AND SOME
PART OF THE RHODESIA POLITICAL SPECTRUM WAS BOUND
TO BE LEFT OUT. POLITICAL LEADERS OF BOTH MAJOR
PARTIES IN BRITAIN HAVE BEEN RESTRAINED IN THEIR
REACTIONS, BECAUSE MUCH REMAINS TO BE WORKED OUT IN
SALISBURY AND SMITH HIMSELF DOES NOT INSPIRE TRUST;
BUT IN REVIEWING THE HISTORY OF FAILED BRITISH EFFORTS,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LONDON 02838 02 OF 02 211302Z

THE URGE TO APPLAUD NOW IS GREAT. THE APPARENT SAFE-GUARDS FOR THE WHITE COMMUNITY MAY DISTORT THE CUSTOMARY CONCEPT OF INDEPENDENCE, BUT RHODESIA IS NOT A CUSTOMARY SITUATION, AND WHILE THE PRINCIPLES OF INDEPENDENCE MAY HAVE BEEN STRETCHED, THEY HAVE NOT BEEN VIOLATED. MOREOVER, FROM THE BRITISH VIEW, THE APPARENT AGREEMENT IS NOT THE RESULT OF THE REGIME'S SUCCESSFUL MANIPULATION OF UNWITTING PUPPETS. SITHOLE, AFTER ALL, WAS ONCE REGARDED AS THE MOST EXTREME OF NATIONALIST LEADERS, A "TERRORIST" IN THE POCKET OF THE CHINESE AND LONG DETAINED BY THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT. AND IT WAS MUZOREWA WHO DEMONSTRATED TO THE PEARCE COMMISSION THAT THE DOUGLAS-HOME PROPOSALS WERE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE BLACK POPULATION. IF NKOMO NOW PREFERS TO SULK IN HIS TENT, SO BE IT. BUT THE AGREEMENT IN SALISBURY IS SOMETHING TANGIBLE AND REAL AND LONG AWAITED.

7. CONCLUSION: ALL THIS IS NOT TO SAY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL ACCEPT ANY KIND OF INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IN ORDER TO GET RID OF THE PROBLEM; IT MUST MEET THE BASIC OBJECTIVES OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL, BOTH BECAUSE THAT IS THE ONLY HOPE FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND, EQUALLY IMPORTANT, BECAUSE THEY WANT TO KEEP THE US AT THEIR SIDE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. NONETHELESS, THE FORMATION OF AN INTERNAL GOVERNMENT IS SEEN BY HMG AS A MAJOR AND HOPEFUL STEP FORWARD IN THE RHODESIA PROCESS, AND SOMETHING TO BE BUILT UPON RATHER THAN REJECTED.

STREATOR

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LONDON 02838 02 OF 02 211302Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, FOREIGN RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON02838
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780078-0010
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780233/aaaabbus.tel
Line Count: 214
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bd0061d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3537738
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: BRITISH ATTITUDES TO THE SALISBURY ANNOUNCEMENT
TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bd0061d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014